

Please accept this information as official testimony in regards to the closing of Enders-Fisherville Elementary School and consolidating students at Halifax Elementary School.

My name is Kathy Shoop. I am a taxpayer, residing at 400 Shoop Lane, Wayne Township. I am a parent of two sons who are 2015 and 2017 graduates of Halifax Area High School. I am an employee of Halifax School District, being hired in December of 2004 as a substitute instructional aide, with substitute secretary added a few years later.

I have some concerns with the consolidation of the elementary schools, most of which have been already mentioned at the public hearing on May 9, 2019:

- Safety of all students and staff in regards to morning drop-off and afternoon pickup of students.
- The time frames involved with the lunch schedules. Also needing to be considered in this schedule are the half-days on the school calendar, as well as the possibility of 2 hour delays, 3 hour delays, and early dismissals due to weather conditions.
- School-wide assemblies happen throughout the school year, and they are currently held in the cafeteria. Is there enough space for the increased student population?
- Analyzing the playground equipment and then determining what equipment is appropriate for the age range of all students.
- Lack of maintenance to the temporary fencing (the orange one) in the pit on the playground.

Due to my experience as an employee who has worked in every building as a substitute secretary and instructional classroom aide, I have additional concerns regarding the consolidation.

- Increasing the PreK classroom size to 20 students. Even though the government guidelines are ten students per one adult, in my opinion, increasing to this class size will be detrimental to the students and the two adults. I have recently worked quite a bit as a substitute aide in a PreK classroom with 15 students, and it was exhausting both mentally and physically. There are many challenges involved with having 3, 4, and 5 year olds together in a classroom while trying to maintain a learning environment. Adding five more students to the dynamics will not be beneficial (in my opinion). Do you realize that the ratio of ten students to one adult is to be kept at all times? This means that if a student needs to go to the nurse, one of the adults needs to take that student and nine additional students to the nurse in order to maintain the proper ratio. The proper ration also needs to be maintained when one of the adults needs to use the restroom. If they cannot find another adult to stay in the classroom in their place, they either have to wait until a later time or else take students with them. If any board member wants to see how the PreK classes are run, volunteer for an hour or two. Proper clearances are required, however.
- Not having two fulltime secretaries in the elementary office. I have worked in every office in the district. All of the offices are run smoothly by highly qualified and hard-working employees. Procedures for each office are in place and diligently followed. The middle school secretary runs the office and is in charge of records for three grade levels. The high school secretary runs the office and is in charge of records for four grade levels. With the proposed plan, the elementary office would be run by only one secretary, requiring one person to be in charge of running the

office and keeping records for six grade levels, plus twenty PreK students. Mrs. Marie Daub is a fabulous secretary and does a tremendous job, but in my opinion this plan would be asking too much of her. This youngest age group is where record keeping is essential. When the bell rings at 2:30 for the secondary students to dismiss, the offices have limited knowledge as to where the students actually are. There are no records kept as to which students are on a bus, which students have been picked up and by whom, which students have driven their own vehicles, which students have walked home or to the Youth Center, or which students have stayed after school for a myriad of activities. This is not the case for elementary aged students. When the dismissal bell rings at 3:30, Mrs. Daub and other staff know which students are on a bus, which students are approved as walkers to walk home, and which students have been picked up from school, and who has picked them up. She has also verified that the person picking up the student is actually allowed to pick them up. This requires many written notes coming into and out of the office, and then of filing the notes in student's file. Of course all of this is happening in conjunction with the telephone ringing from outside callers and employee callers, outsiders needing to be admitted into the building, reading emails from inside and outside the district, handling copier emergencies, distributing the mail in mailboxes, recording student Cat Stars, recording substitute teacher and substitute aide information, dealing with unexpected situations, all while trying to schedule time to go to the bathroom and have an uninterrupted lunch period. When employees are stretched to the limit, work performance can suffer and mistakes are more likely to happen. From my first-hand experience, my opinion is that two full-time secretaries are needed to run the elementary office efficiently and effectively. If any board member wants to see how the elementary office is currently run and how crazy it can get, stop by for a few hours and observe things first hand.

Thank you for your consideration in reading by concerns. I hope that we all want the same thing....to do what is best for all of the students.

Sincerely,

Kathy Shoop